

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00513 131441Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, IS, JO

SUBJ: WEST BANK ELECTION RESULTS

REF: JERUSALEM 506

1. SUMMARY: SELF-STYLED "NATIONALISTS" AND "PROGRESSIVES" WERE MAJOR WINNERS IN APRIL 12 WEST BANK MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN FESTIVE, INCIDENT-FREE ATMOSPHERE. OVER 72 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE VOTED, INCLUDING 69 PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE WOMEN. END SUMMARY.

2. YOUNGER CANDIDATES ON "PROGRESSIVE" AND NATIONALIST" SLATES WON IMPRESSIVE VICTORIES IN MOST CITIES AND SEVERAL SMALLER TOWNS IN APRIL 12 WEST BANK MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. "NATIONALIST" SLATES ALL BUT SWEEP ELECTIONS IN NABLUS, RAMALLAH, HEBRON, AND TULKARM. ONLY BETHLEHEM'S ELIAS FREIJ RAN AGAINST THE TIDE, WINNING POPULAR VOTE AND FILLING A MAJORITY OF COUNCIL SEATS WITH HIS SUPPORTERS. RELATIVELY YOUNG AND UNKNOWN CANDIDATES REPLACED INCUMBENTS IN BEIT JALA AND HALHUL.

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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00513 131441Z

3. VOTER TURNOUT WAS GENERALLY HEAVY: 72 PERCENT OF ALL

REGISTERED AND 69 PERCENT OF REGISTERED WOMEN VOTED. ONLY IN NABLUS, WHERE 54 PERCENT OF REGISTERED VOTED, WAS TURNOUT RELATIVELY LIGHT. HIGHEST TURNOUT (94 PERCENT) WAS IN QABATIYA (SOUTH OF JENIN) WHERE, ACCORDING TO JERUSALEM POST, WOMEN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO REGISTER. FIGURES FOR MAJOR CITIES AS FOLLOWS: RAMALLAH - 73 PERCENT, HEBRON - 78 PERCENT AND BETHLEHEM 67 PERCENT.

4. VOTING TOOK PLACE IN CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE, BUT WAS GENERALLY ORDERLY. ISRAELI TROOPS WERE NOT IN SIGHT. FEW CHARGES OF IRREGULARITIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED.

5. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR TOWNS, THE FRONT RUNNERS AND SLATE AFFILIATION, IF ANY:

NABLUS - BISSAM SHEKA' (NATIONALIST); RAMALLAH - KARIM KHALAF, INCUMBENT, (NATIONALIST); HEBRON - FAHD QAWASIMA (NATIONALIST); BETHLEHEM - ELIAS FREIJ, INCUMBENT; TULKARM - HILMI HANNUN, INCUMBENT, (NATIONALIST); JERICHO - SALIH BALU (PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONALISTS); EL-BIREH - AHMED MA'RUF (PROGRESSIVE NATIONALIST ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONALISTS).

6. JERICHO'S INCUMBENT MAYOR SHAFIQ BALI RAN A DISAPPOINTING FIFTH, BUT WON SEAT ON NEW CITY COUNCIL. BEIT JALA'S FARAH ARRAJ WAS OUSTED COMPLETELY BY THE YOUNG "PEOPLE'S" SLATE OF BISHAM DAOUD. IN BEIT SAHUR, ADMINISTRATIVE DETAINEE ATTALLAH RISHMAWI, NOW IN PRISON, WON A COUNCIL SEAT BUT THE REST OF HIS SLATE DID NOT. THE ONLY CANDIDATE IN BETHLEHEM INCLUDED IN AL FARJ'S APRIL 12 FRONT-PAGE ENDORSEMENT, GEORGE HAZBUN, RAN AS AN INDEPENDENT AND PLACED SECOND. FREIJ'S MAJOR OPPOSITION, FORMER DEPUTY MAYOR HANNA NASSER, RATHER SURPRISINGLY PLACED SIXTH AND ONLY ONE OTHER OF HIS SLATE WAS ELECTED.

7. NONE OF THE FOUR WOMEN CANDIDATES WAS ELECTED.

8. AN AMCIT, AHMED OTHMAN DOWLEH, RAN FIRST IN THE SMALL TOWN OF BETUNIA.

9. DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, NEW COUNCILS WILL MEET TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 JERUSA 00513 131441Z

DESIGNATE ONE MEMBER FOR MAYOR, GENERALLY THE FRONT RUNNER. FORMAL APPOINTMENT IS MADE BY MILGOV.

10. COMMENT: THE VICTORY OF YOUNG, PROGRESSIVE NATIONALISTS, THOUGH EXPECTED, IS IMPRESSIVE IN ITS SCOPE. SLATES WON OVERWHELMINGLY IN ALL MAJOR CITIES EXCEPT BETHLEHEM, EVEN WHERE THERE WERE STRONG INDEPENDENTS, E.G. RAMALLAH, AND IN MANY SMALLER TOWNS. INCUMBENTS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THESE SLATES

FARED BADLY, E.G. JERICHO AND BEIT JALA. FURTHER
ANALYSIS REQUIRED, BUT AT THIS STAGE WE CAUTION AGAINST CON-
CLUSION THAT "RADICALS" HAVE TAKEN POWER IN MUNICIPALITIES OF
WEST BANK. COMMUNISTS AND "CAPITALIST" ENTREPRENEURS CLEARLY
CO-EXIST ON SOME "NATIONALIST" SLATES. THE RADICAL CHANGE
WILL BE IN HEBRON, IF FRONTRUNNER QAWASIMA BECOMES MAYOR, AND
IN SEVERAL SMALLER TOWNS WHERE POLITICAL AUTHORITY IS
PASSING FROM TRADITION-BOUND ELDERS TO NEW, BETTER-
EDUCATED GENERATION.
JONES

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